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Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Letter dated 16 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Geneva Declaration core group of States,* I have the honour to transmit herewith the "Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development" of 7 June 2006 (annex I) and the "Summit statement" (annex II) adopted at the conclusion of the Review Summit of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development on 12 September 2008.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be issued as documents of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 107.

(*Signed*) Peter **Maurer**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* Core group: Brazil, Finland, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

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Annex I to the letter dated 16 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development

Armed violence destroys lives and livelihoods, breeds insecurity, fear and terror, and has a profoundly negative impact on human development. Whether in situations of conflict or crime, it imposes enormous costs on States, communities and individuals.

Armed violence closes schools, empties markets, burdens health services, destroys families, weakens the rule of law, and prevents humanitarian assistance from reaching people in need. Armed violence kills, directly and indirectly, hundreds of thousands of people each year and injures countless more, often with lifelong consequences. It threatens permanently the respect of human rights.

Living free from the threat of armed violence is a basic human need. It is a precondition for human development, dignity and well-being. Providing for the human security of their citizens is a core responsibility of Governments.

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome, global leaders recognized the strong linkage and mutual reinforcement between development, peace, security and human rights. They stressed the right of people to live in dignity, free from fear and from want.

The international community has acknowledged that armed violence and conflict impede realization of the Millennium Development Goals, and that conflict prevention and resolution, violence reduction, human rights, good governance and peacebuilding are key steps towards reducing poverty, promoting economic growth and improving people's lives.

The Peacebuilding Commission, by establishing an institutional link between security and development, will also promote an integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and play a central role in addressing the problem of armed violence.

Recognizing these realities, we, Ministers and representatives from 42 countries, representing all the world's regions, have gathered in Geneva and have resolved to promote sustainable security and a culture of peace by taking action to reduce armed violence and its negative impact on socio-economic and human development.

We will strengthen our efforts to integrate armed violence reduction and conflict prevention programmes into national, regional and multilateral development frameworks, institutions and strategies, as well as into humanitarian assistance, emergency and crisis management initiatives.

We will work individually and together, at national, regional and multilateral levels, on practical measures that:

- Promote conflict prevention, resolution and reconciliation and support post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction;
- Stem the proliferation, illegal trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons and ammunition, and lead to effective weapons reduction, post-

conflict disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and small arms control, including control of arms transfers and of illicit brokering;

- Uphold full respect for human rights, promote the peaceful settlement of conflicts based on justice and the rule of law and address a climate of impunity;
- Foster effective and accountable public security institutions;
- Promote a comprehensive approach to armed violence reduction issues, recognizing the different situations, needs and resources of men and women, boys and girls, as reflected in the provisions of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1612 (2005);
- Ensure that armed violence prevention and reduction initiatives target specific risk factors and groups, and are linked to programmes providing non-violent alternative livelihoods for individuals and communities.

We will take further action to deal effectively both with the supply of and the demand for small arms and light weapons. This includes implementing fully existing instruments, in particular the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and promoting the development of further international instruments, including legally binding ones.

We commit to enhancing the financial, technical and human resources devoted to addressing armed violence issues in a cooperative, comprehensive and coordinated manner, including working, inter alia, to advance this issue within the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other relevant organizations.

We will support initiatives to measure the human, social and economic costs of armed violence, to assess risks and vulnerabilities, to evaluate the effectiveness of armed violence reduction programmes and to disseminate knowledge of best practices. We will work with affected States and communities and with the donor community, to promote solutions at the local, national, regional and global level.

We will strive to achieve, by 2015, measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and tangible improvements in human security worldwide.

We will work in partnership with the development, peace and security-building, public health, humanitarian, human rights and criminal justice communities and, recognizing the important role civil society has to play in reducing armed violence, promote active partnerships between Governments, international organizations and civil society.

We will present this declaration to the upcoming United Nations Conference to review the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We commit ourselves to pursuing this initiative in all appropriate fora and to meeting again no later than 2008 to assess our progress in achieving these goals.

Geneva, 7 June 2006

Annex II to the letter dated 16 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Review Summit of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development hosted by the Government of Switzerland and the United Nations Development Programme

Summit statement

We, the representatives of 85 countries, having gathered here today in Geneva to assess the progress made in implementing and to reaffirm our support and commitment to the goals laid down in the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, adopted on 7 June 2006:

Commend the efforts made to date in implementing the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development through the promotion of sustainable security and a culture of peace by taking action to reduce armed violence and its negative impact on socio-economic and human development;

Recognize that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and that armed violence may hinder the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

Recognize also that national, regional and international development policies can provide important tools for the prevention of armed violence, and in this context resolve to continue working together to prevent and reduce armed violence in order to enhance the prospects for sustainable development at the global, regional, national and local levels for both the present and future generations;

Welcome the fact that to date 94 countries have adopted the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, and encourage additional countries to do so;

Commend the Governments of Guatemala, Kenya and Thailand for having taken the initiative to host regional conferences on armed violence and development, which resulted in the adoption of regional declarations on armed violence and development that take into account regional and national specificities related to the incidence of armed violence;

Encourage States and relevant international and regional organizations to implement these regional declarations on armed violence and development;

Acknowledge that States bear the primary responsibility for preventing, reducing and ending armed violence in their territories through practical measures and appropriate mechanisms, including (a) the peaceful resolution of disputes, (b) respecting and protecting human rights, and (c) promoting sustainable development and a culture of peace;

Recall our commitment to strive to achieve measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence by 2015 and commend the work already accomplished to promote the implementation of the Geneva Declaration through practical measures suggested in the Framework of Implementation;

Welcome and encourage the continued assessment of the impact of armed violence on girls, women, boys and men as an essential tool for advancing the implementation of the Geneva Declaration. We encourage the efforts undertaken at national and sub-national levels to develop methodologies and strategies to assess the impact of armed violence on socio-economic and human development;

Support the efforts adopted by countries as part of their national policies for promoting sustainable socio-economic development and for addressing the scourge of armed violence and its negative impacts on development as part of the practical implementation of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development;

Encourage gender equality, and specifically the participation of women, in the design, implementation and evaluation of armed violence prevention and reduction programmes;

Recognize that partnerships among States, international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society are essential for promoting comprehensive and integrated responses to effectively address the scourge of armed violence and its impact on socio-economic and human development;

Welcome the initiatives taken by the Governments of the Geneva Declaration core group of States to implement the objectives of the Geneva Declaration, including through concrete projects aimed at preventing and reducing armed violence and promoting sustainable development;

Encourage States and appropriate international and regional and subregional organizations in a position to do so, and upon request of the relevant authorities, to consider providing assistance, including technical and financial assistance where needed, for the implementation of initiatives aimed at the prevention and reduction of armed violence at national and local levels, while recognizing the important contribution that South-South cooperation can make to this end;

Affirm, however, that while adverse security conditions in a particular country may impede the implementation of armed violence prevention and reduction initiatives, this should not be used as a form of conditionality with respect to the provision of technical or financial assistance;

Note the 2005 decision of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to allow certain activities related to preventing and reducing armed violence to be considered eligible for official development assistance;

Reaffirm the commitments in the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/1) to advancing development, peace and security and human rights, and resolve to develop goals, targets and measurable indicators on armed violence and development as a complement to the Millennium Development Goals;

Reaffirm our support for United Nations efforts to promote armed violence reduction, in particular the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects;

Commit ourselves to support and continue all further efforts to advance the goals of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development in all appropriate forums including the United Nations General Assembly;

Encourage all those States that have adopted the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development to support and continue their efforts to disseminate the goals and principles of the Geneva Declaration at the international, regional, subregional and national levels;

Remain determined in our resolve to implement the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, and in this regard agree to meet again not later than 2011 to assess our progress in achieving these common goals.

Geneva, 12 September 2008